

To: Town Council  
From: Matt Hart, Town Manager  
CC: Town Employees  
Date: December 14, 2009  
Re: Town Manager's Report

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Below please find a report regarding various items of interest to the Town Council, staff and the community:

### **Town Council Rules of Procedure**

- At the Town Council's last meeting, I appreciated the opportunity to provide you with a general orientation that included a discussion of your rules of procedures. During the second public comment period of the meeting, I was subjected to a baseless personal attack from one of our citizens in regards to your unanimous approval of my employment agreement. The Town Council ruled the citizen out of order, which I believe was entirely appropriate. Members of the public certainly have the right to critique and disagree with decisions made by the Council and the administration. Debate on the merits of a particular issue is an essential component of democracy and constructive criticism is always welcome. However, under the Town Council's rules of procedures no one has the right to "impugn the motive, character or integrity of any individual," and "all participants should address their remarks to the Mayor and maintain a courteous tone." Furthermore, Robert's Rules of Order, which the Town Council's rules of procedure incorporate by reference, specifically provide that "an assembly has the right to protect itself from annoyance by nonmembers...the chair has the power to require nonmembers to leave the hall, or to order their removal, at any time during the meeting; and they have no right of appeal from any such order of the presiding officer." These rules are in place to ensure civilized debate and to maintain order during the meeting. Council members and staff are here to serve the community and personal attacks on any individual are not warranted in this setting. I thank the Council for enforcing its rules and encourage the members to keep a close eye on this important issue.

### **Budget and Finance**

- *Finance Committee* – staff would like to schedule a Finance Committee meeting for Late December/early January to review a few key items for submission to the full Council. As reported at the last meeting, the FY 2009/10 Pequot-Mohegan grant has been reduced by \$270,847 or 58% from \$466,221 to \$195,374. In addition, the Governor has proposed an \$84 million mid-year cut in state aid to cities and towns, which, if approved, could have further ramifications for Mansfield. At the Finance Committee meeting, staff will present the members with options to amend the affected budgets for the current year.
- *Region 19 Budget Meeting* – the Mayor and I attended the Region's recent budget session with municipal leaders. The Mayor emphasized the importance of controlling expenditures in an era of declining revenues; please see item #9 in the packet for a copy of the Mayor's testimony.

### **Council Requests for Information**

- *Town Attorney billing* – please see item #15 in the Council packet for additional information regarding this item.

### **Departmental/Division News**

- *Mansfield Public Library*
  - On Saturday December 19<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 AM the Mansfield Library will host *Family Storytime*. Join them for stories, songs, finger-plays and simple crafts especially for young children and their families.

### **Project Updates**

- *Ad hoc Regionalization Study Committee* – the Mayor and I attended the recent meeting of the *ad hoc* committee that is looking at additional regional opportunities for our public schools. In particular, we reviewed a school profile comparison and a preliminary estimate of salary costs. We asked the four superintendents to convene and to develop one or more proposed models to analyze the costs associated with regionalizing various aspects of the preK-8 system.
- *Governor's Council on Public Health Regionalization* – given the Town's interest in regionalism, I volunteered to serve as the CCM representative to this committee charged with providing recommendations to promote the regional delivery of public health services in Connecticut. Our report is due to the Governor around January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- *Manager's Work Group* - Maria Capriola and I have established a work group of area town managers and administrators to identify possibilities for shared service delivery. As a next step, we will conduct an inventory of major purchasing contracts and agreements to determine if there are additional opportunities for shared purchasing.
- *Mansfield 2020: A Unified Vision* (strategic plan) – the Town Manager's Office has convened a working group of interested employees to prepare a draft vision point and action plan for the town government as an organization, and we intend to submit the vision point and related plan to the Council for review. We will also work with the new Council to prioritize other elements of the strategic plan.
- *Police Study* – during this past quarter, staff issued a request for qualifications (RFQ) to solicit letters of interest from consultants qualified to conduct a study of police services in Mansfield. I am requesting the assistance of the Council's Regionalism Committee to assist staff with evaluating the submittals and selecting the consultant to complete the study.
- *Probate court consolidation* – under legislation approved by the General Assembly, the Mansfield/Coventry and the Tolland/Willington probate courts will merge as of January 5, 2011. I am meeting with my colleagues in the three other communities and the two incumbent probate judges to work out the key issues, most notably the location of the court, the court name and a proposed budget. I will keep the Council apprised of our progress and solicit your guidance as we move forward.
- *Town Council media project* – staff has contracted with Valley Communications Systems, Inc. to install the new media equipment in the Council Chambers, while the Facilities Management Department installs the video booth in the rear of the room. We expect the project to be completed by the end of January 2010.
- *WINCOG Regional Economic Development Plan* – WINGOG is the lead agency on this project. The consulting firm of AKRF has finalized its draft of the proposed plan, which will be presented to the WINCOG board in January 2010. One key recommendation in the report is that the WINCOG member Towns collectively fund staff or retain a consulting firm to implement a regional economic development program.

### **Miscellaneous**

- *Storrs Farmers Market* - Storrs Winter Farmers Market opened Saturday, Dec. 12, from 3 - 5 p.m., in the Buchanan Auditorium at the Mansfield Public Library. The Winter Market will be held on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month from December through April (in December, the market will be open on the third Saturday due to the Christmas holiday). Stock up on everything needed to have a "Homegrown Holiday!" Visitors to Storrs Winter Farmers Market will find a large selection of locally grown fruits and vegetables as well as apple cider, fresh baked goods, all-natural beef, goats milk cheeses, honey, and maple syrup. Customers may place their orders for holiday pies and roasts at the market or e-mail [StorrsFarmersMarket@gmail.com](mailto:StorrsFarmersMarket@gmail.com) for contacts for ordering. Give a taste of Connecticut to friends and families this year with locally grown and produced gifts. Local honey and maple syrup are sweet treats that come in a variety of sizes. Beeswax candles and goats milk soaps are unique hostess gifts. Or, knit your own gifts with hand-spun wool yarn. In 2008, Storrs Farmers Market opened the first winter market in northeastern Connecticut. It proved to be so popular with customers and vendors alike that it has expanded to twice a month this year! For more information about Storrs Farmers Market or to sign up for

weekly newsletters, please e-mail [StorrsFarmersMarket@gmail.com](mailto:StorrsFarmersMarket@gmail.com). For a complete listing of the Winter Market dates, please visit [www.storrsfarmers.org](http://www.storrsfarmers.org).

#### **Upcoming Meetings\***

- Youth Service Bureau Advisory Board, December 15, 2009, 11:45 AM, Conference Room B, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Open Space Preservation Committee, December 15, 2009, 7:00 PM, Conference Room B, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Clean Energy Team, December 15, 2009, 7:00 PM, Conference Room C, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Four Corners Sewer and Water Advisory Committee, December 15, 2009, 7:00 PM, Council Chambers, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Conservation Commission, December 16, 2009, 7:00 PM, Conference Room B, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Mansfield Board of Education, December 17, 2009, 7:30 PM, Council Chambers, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Committee on Committees, December 21, 2009, 6:00 PM, Conference Room B, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Planning and Zoning Commission, December 21, 2009, 7:00 PM, Council Chambers, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Traffic Authority, December 22, 2009, 10:30 AM, Conference Room B, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Mansfield Advisory Committee on the Needs of Persons with Disabilities, December 22, 2009, 2:30 PM, Conference Room B, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Town Council Meeting, December 28, 2009, 7:30 PM, Council Chambers, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building

*\*Meeting dates/times are subject to change. Please view the Town Calendar at [www.MansfieldCT.org](http://www.MansfieldCT.org) or contact the Town Clerk's Office at 429-3302 for a complete and up-to-date listing of committee meetings.*

In closing, I would like to wish the Town Council, our employees and the public a very happy and safe holiday season.